

MEMORIAL

OF A LARGE

Number of Delegates from most of the Counties

IN THE

STATE OF NEW YORK,

Praying that a Duty may be laid upon the Importation of any Woollen or Cotton Goods, upon the Export of which, to this country, a protecting Duty shall be paid by any Foreign Government, to twice the amount of such protection.

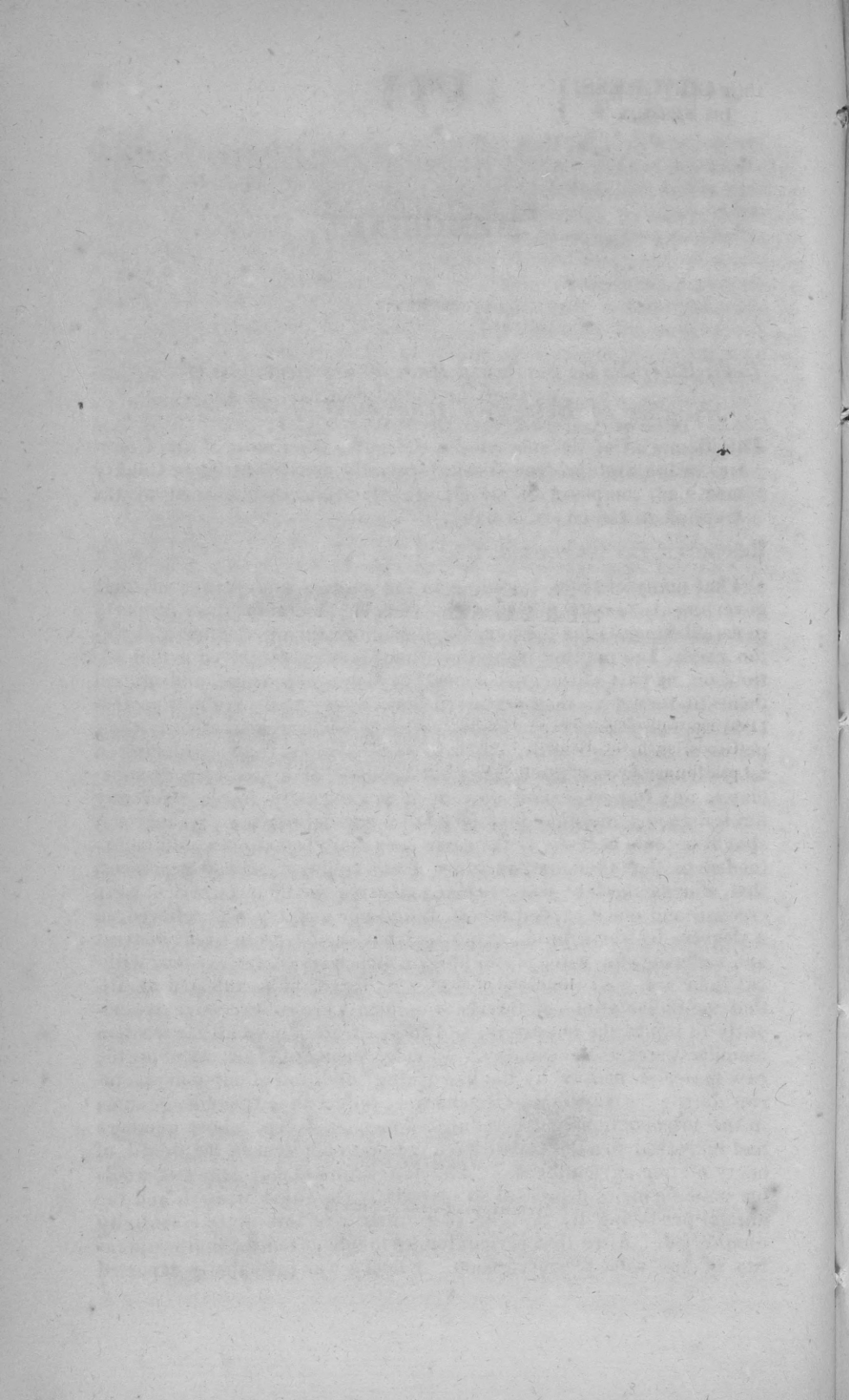
JANUARY 19, 1824.

Read, and ordered to lie upon the table.

WASHINGTON :

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1824.



MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States,

The Memorial of the subscribers, delegates from most of the Counties in the State of New-York, (specially deputed at large County meetings, composed of all classes of citizens,) convened at the Capitol, in the city of Albany,

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS,

That many of them, confiding in the wisdom and justice of their government, have employed a considerable portion of their property in establishments for the purpose of manufacturing woollen and cotton goods, and making iron: they thought they perceived a disposition, on the part of the government, to foster, encourage, and protect domestic industry: they perceived that, under that care and protection, the manufacturers of coarse cotton goods were successfully competing with foreign skill, capital, and industry, and producing a fabric from the raw material of our country, of a quality very superior to any imported, and now at a price vastly lower than any foreign goods; and they therefore felt a conviction, that, whenever it should become necessary, the same care and protection would be extended to the other manufactures of our country. They represent, that, during the late war, many extensive woollen factories were erected, and much capital invested, and our country was relieved, in a degree, by their products during that period, from great distress and suffering, for want of clothing, which would have existed, without their aid. At the close of that war, it will be recollected by all, that the importations of foreign woollens were so excessive as seriously to injure the importers, and to prostrate almost all the woollen manufacturers of the country. In consequence of the demand for the raw material, created by the flourishing condition of our manufactories during the war, many citizens were induced to expend large sums in the introduction and breeding of merino sheep, whose numbers had increased so as to constitute a considerable item in the wealth of many of our agriculturists. The destruction of our domestic woollen manufactories depressed so essentially the value of wool, and the animal producing it, that in 1816 their numbers were essentially diminished. After that period, for some time, even the limited quantity of fine wool produced from our flocks was principally exported

to Great Britain; but the prices of woollen goods having again risen in the market, other individuals were induced to purchase the establishments erected during the war, and put them into successful operation: their success induced others to adventure, and many more valuable establishments have been erected, much machinery procured, and many individuals employed in them. In the year 1821, the consumption having equalled the product of the raw material, a small quantity of wool was imported. This fact, of public notoriety, doubtless attracted the notice and attention of the manufacturers of Great Britain, and since that period the course of business, as it regards importations, has almost entirely changed. Anterior thereto, our own merchants imported, on their own account, and at merely a fair mercantile profit, goods equal to the wants of the country. Since that period, our great markets have been overstocked with British woollen goods, which have been sold on account of the manufacturer, or British merchant, at auction, and at prices less than their actual cost: the inevitable consequence of which system and course of business, if persisted in for only a short period of time more, must be the ruin and destruction of the present woollen manufacturers of this country. Their competition once destroyed, and the amount of importations will be regulated by the wants of our country, and at a price resting exclusively in the discretion of the foreign manufacturer or merchant; for, it can hardly be supposed, that, after the destruction of the property, and the annihilation of the hopes of two sets of men, without any effort on the part of the government to sustain them, another set will be found fool-hardy enough to attempt a renewal of woollen manufactures; and without competition there is no criterion to regulate prices, other than the will of the producer. Should it be objected, that the effect of encouraging domestic manufactures, by the imposition of protecting duties, will be to enhance the price of the manufactured article, we answer, that, although this may, and probably will be the effect, for a short period of time, it cannot be permanent, and we cite, with confidence, the case of coarse cotton goods, as affording conclusive evidence on the subject. Domestic competition will soon bring the profit of manufacturing to its proper level.

Your memorialists further represent, that the consequence of merely a suspension of the woollen manufactories of this country would be sensibly felt by the community, as it would remove from employment great numbers of persons incapable of acquiring a livelihood by other means. If they turn their attention to agriculture, they find themselves ignorant of even the theory, and our markets already supplied to an excess with its products. Besides, we know that it is always hazardous in the extreme, for an individual to depart from the business for which he has prepared himself by early habit and education, and to attempt any other.

Your memorialists believe, that those who are, in their persons and property, subject to the demands and calls of the government, are particularly entitled to its protection and care, and that this protection and care should be extended to every class of the community.

The agriculturist, the manufacturer, and the resident American merchant, are at all times, in person and property, subject to the laws of their country, and bound to its support, and therefore entitled to its peculiar favor.

The commercial interest of our country has received and enjoys every aid and protection which the ingenuity of the ship owners could suggest. It remains, therefore, to extend protection to the other great interests of the country, the agricultural and manufacturing. The policy of the British government excludes from her market almost all the products of the middle, eastern, and northern sections of the Union. These same sections are capable of producing, by the improvement of the advantages nature has afforded them, and the application of their skill and industry, almost all articles necessary, not only for their own comfort, but for that of every other portion of the United States, if duly protected by the government in their first efforts. But, it must be observed, that it requires all the means of persons usually devoted to manufacturing pursuits, to purchase a site, erect buildings, procure the necessary machinery and stock for commencing operations; he must then rely on immediate sales, for the continuance of his operations; and should an unfavorable fluctuation, such as we have several times experienced within a few years, take place, he is at once broken down, and his hopes are blasted, as men of large capital are ever averse to risking that capital on untried projects.

Your memorialists state, with confidence, that cotton goods occupy the place of linen with the laboring and middle classes of society, in this and the neighboring States. The entire substitution of satinets for the coarse woollen cloths of Europe, would increase the domestic consumption of cotton many millions of pounds annually, and would furnish to the agriculturist a ready market, at a fair price, for all his wool of a coarse quality. The extension of protection to cotton goods of a finer quality than now existing, would ensure a domestic market for a still further quantity, and by increasing the number of those employed in manufactures, give an additional value to all our agricultural products.

Your memorialists further represent, that the northern and western parts of this state abound in iron ore, of superior quality, and are covered with forests, necessary for converting it into iron, with immense water power. Could the manufacture of this article be permitted to enjoy further protection from government, there can be no doubt that investments of capital would speedily be made, productive of profit to the individuals concerned, and conducive to the real independence of our country.

We view, with apprehension, the total failure of our infant domestic manufactories, and consequent serious injuries to the agricultural interests of the country, unless wisely and extensively protected by Government. We consider the present system of sales of foreign goods at auction, as fraught with almost incalculable evils to

every interest productive of speculation and constant fluctuation, a state of things, seriously to be deplored by every one.

It is a notorious fact, that the British government pays a bounty to the manufacturers of Irish linen, in many instances, equal to the whole charge of freight, insurance, and duty paid here, and it hence results, that the article can be sold in our market as cheap as at home; and, it is fairly to be presumed, that similar protection will be afforded to the manufacturers of woollen goods; indeed, there is already strong reason to suppose, that the measure has been adopted, in regard to the shipments made to this country during the last season. First, because goods of British manufacture have come invoiced at a much lower price than formerly; and, secondly, because the best interests of that government require and demand such protection.

The pauper population of that country has heretofore produced a burthen on its property and resources, equal to about twenty millions of dollars per year; indeed, so heavy have been the contributions for its support in several manufacturing districts, during periods of manufacturing depression, that the value of real estate was entirely annihilated, as tenants could not be procured, who would pay the poor rates merely. If, therefore, by paying in bounty to her manufacturers a sum, equal to the whole amount of difference between the cost and price received here, she can secure the employment of her poor population, she will save, probably, seventy per cent. on her poor rates, and improve the moral habits of that portion of her population, by accustoming them to habits of industry, temperance, and frugality.

Your Memorialists will not dilate further on this interesting subject; they fondly hope, that, in your honorable bodies will be found enough to support and protect the capital invested in domestic manufactures, to encourage further investments, and to give full and constant employ to such portion of our population to be employed in such pursuits, as to produce a demand for the productions of our soil equal to that product, and thus encourage these two great sources of national wealth and prosperity. *And they therefore pray,* specifically, that a duty upon the importation of any woollen or cotton goods, upon the export of which, to this country, a protecting duty shall be paid by any foreign government, to twice the amount of such protection; and such other and further protection, as, in your wisdom, may seem proper and necessary to encourage and foster our infant establishments.

GEO. M'CLURE, *President.*

RICHARD P. HART, *Secretary.*

On motion,

Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting be signed by the President and Secretary, and forwarded to the Senators and Repre-

sentatives in Congress from this State, with an earnest request, that their best efforts will be used to procure the passage of a law conformable to the wishes of this meeting.

A true extract from the minutes of the meeting.

RICHARD P. HART, *Secretary.*

